

Week 2: Leviticus and the Lord’s Supper (Lev. 3, 9, 11, 16)

R⁴: Read, Reflect, Review, Resolve.

1. **Read** Leviticus 3, 9, 11, 16.
2. **Reflect** on the ideas, context, concepts, and stipulations presented in these passages and in the conversations that emerge out of them.
3. **Review** the remainder of this handout, including the discussion questions offered. Take your conversations in whatever direction you like. Have fun with them.
4. **Resolve** the major issues and tensions that arose in your discussions (whether in the biblical text, in your reflection, or in your review of the handout). Remember to focus on how each topic refers back to the Lord’s Supper.

Context: Assumptions and “Problems” in Leviticus

- God literally lives with the Israelites.
- To remain within God’s space, and certainly to worship God, you have to be holy.
- Your holiness is constantly lost or broken simply by living your life. Therefore, God’s people have to constantly recapture their holiness (only to lose it again soon thereafter).
- There was a personal and collective aspect to holiness.

Three Categories of Person or Thing or Place

Every person and thing could be classified into one of three categories, and within those categories there existed different levels.

| Category | People | Location |
|----------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Holy | Priests, Levites | At the tabernacle |
| Clean | Israelites | Inside the camp |
| Unclean | Gentiles (“Pagans”) | Outside the camp |

Five Types of Sacrifices (Chapters 1-7)

| Offering | Animal | Portion | Purpose |
|--------------|--|--|---|
| Burnt | Unblemished, male from herd, flock, or birds | All of it burned | Thankfulness (voluntary) |
| Cereal | Flour or grains | Part burned, part eaten by priests | Thankfulness (voluntary) |
| Peace | Male or female from herd or flock | Fat burned, part for priests, part for giver | Thankfulness, for a vow (voluntary) |
| Purification | Unblemished from herd or flock | Fat burned, other part eaten by priests | Atone for sin or purify (required) |
| Guilt | Unblemished ram | Fat burned, other part eaten by priests | Something has become unclean (required) |

Clean and Unclean (Chapters 11)

| Reasons | Clean | Unclean |
|--|---|--|
| Separated Israelites, some animals had disease, some associated with cults | Cloven-hoofed, cud-chewing land animals, fish with fins/scales, birds and insects | Carnivores, birds of prey, reptiles, certain insects—all animals associated with death |

Clean and Unclean Animals (Chapter 11)

- Despite repeated attempts, there was no clear-cut reason for why certain animals were considered “clean” and others “unclean.”

Yom Kippur (Chapter 16)

- The Day of Atonement was an annual clearing of sin, when God sent away all unconfessed and unknown collective sin. Of two goats, one was slaughtered, the other symbolically “sent away,” the literally meaning of Azazel, which was the “scapegoat.”

Week 2: Leviticus and the Lord's Supper (Lev. 3, 9, 11, 16)

Questions

1. What has been the most challenging or eye-opening thing you have learned about these passages in Leviticus?
2. The book of Leviticus presupposes "holy space," since God literally dwells with the people. Does "holy space" exist today?
3. What was Jesus's response to "clean" and "unclean" animals and diet (see Mark 7; or Paul's in Romans 14:14)?
4. Of the five sacrifices in Leviticus 1-7, which kind was Jesus's on the cross? How, if at all, was it different from those in Leviticus?
5. Is there a difference between the New Testament describing Jesus as "the lamb of God" versus "the goat of God"? How so, since both animals were used to remove sin?
6. Do you see any similarities, foundational prescriptions, or concepts in Leviticus that are reflected in the Lord's Supper? If so, which ones?
7. How do these passages in Leviticus provide context to the Lord's Supper? (Think in terms of categories such as food, drink, holiness, sacrifice, atonement, who is allowed to partake and who is not, insiders vs. outsiders, etc.)